



Lynmore Nursery School Ltd

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	123636
Inspection date	18 January 2007
Inspector	Hilary Preece
Setting Address	34 Sun Lane, Harpenden, Hertfordshire, AL5 4HA
Telephone number	01 582 764172
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Registered person	Lynmore Nursery School Ltd
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Lynmore Nursery school opened in 1988. It operates from a private house and uses three main rooms on the ground floor of the property which is located in a residential area close to central Harpenden. There is a large fully enclosed garden available for outside play. A maximum of 22 children may attend the nursery at any one time. The nursery is open each weekday from 08:00 until 18:00 with children attending a morning, afternoon or all day session. The nursery runs for 47 weeks in the year.

There are currently 48 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 22 children receive funding for early education. Children attend from Harpenden and the surrounding areas. The setting offers support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs six members of staff. Of these, four hold appropriate early years qualifications. The nursery receives support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, and is a member of the National Day Nurseries Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children lead healthy and active lifestyles at nursery. They become aware of their own health and hygiene needs as they become independent in dressing, managing the toilet and blowing their noses. They understand the importance of hand-washing as this is reinforced carefully by staff. Children are further protected by sound hygiene and cleaning routines that are followed by the nursery. Some stringent environmental health guidelines have recently been introduced that ensure children are protected from cross-contamination. Children are protected from the spread of infections as sick children are excluded from the nursery, and appropriate action is taken in the event of accidents as staff ensure their first aid training is up-to-date.

Children have healthy appetites for the meals that are freshly prepared on site. They enjoy a variety of fresh fruits for snacks and water or milk is available to drink. Children make healthy choices and are encouraged to try new fruits. Mealtimes are sociable and relaxed occasions when children talk about their favourite foods and staff emphasise the goodness in fruit and vegetables. Children's individual dietary needs are respected and systems are in place to ensure that they do not eat foods to which they may be allergic.

Children become aware of the impact of healthy living on their bodies through topic work and opportunities for regular fresh air and physical activity in the garden. They develop strength, co-ordination and control over their movements as they use a wide range of physical equipment, including climbing apparatus, pedal cars, bats and balls. They take part in structured PE sessions and assault courses, as well as having opportunities for free play. Children develop good fine motor control as they use scissors, paint brushes, and manipulate cutlery. They also take part in many activities that develop hand to eye co-ordination, such as spooning ingredients into bowls.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and homely environment, with small groups and attractive rooms to help children quickly settle and feel relaxed in their surroundings. Children move around their designated areas with ease and they have sufficient space to play and rest. Children remain safe as regular checks of the premises and equipment are carried out and monitored. The emergency evacuation procedure has just been reviewed so that fire drills are carried out more frequently, thus ensuring adults and children can protect themselves in an emergency. Children use a good range of equipment and resources that is appropriate for their age and stimulating. These are well-maintained and mainly organised so that children can help themselves to what they want to use.

Children learn to keep themselves safe because staff have regard for developing children's awareness of safety through regular discussion and planned activities. Children become aware of keeping safe when near the roads through visits from the road safety officer who acts out with the children how to safely use zebra crossings. Children learn how to use equipment, such as tweezers, safely during activities as staff give regard to this.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as there are effective procedures for signing children in and out of the premises. However, some policies and procedures for keeping children safe, such as the uncollected and lost child policy, are not comprehensive and do not fully protect children. This potentially puts children at risk in certain circumstances. Staff understand their role in child protection and have all the necessary reporting information available. However, the policy does not address procedures to follow in the event of an allegation being made against staff, which may compromise children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled throughout the sessions as their individual care needs are met. Young children have access to their comforters from home, are changed or taken to the toilet frequently, and sleep comfortably whenever needed. Children are involved in a broad range of age-appropriate activities and experiences that promote their learning and enjoyment. Staff carefully plan a balanced curriculum based on the 'Birth to three matters' framework for the younger children. Plans take account of children's previous experience and initial starting points and their progress is carefully monitored. Most of the activities take place on the site, with occasional outings into the local community.

Children show curiosity as they confidently explore their surroundings and are keen to participate in all that is going on. Children communicate very well with staff and develop warm relationships. They talk freely and comfortably about what they are doing, such as explaining the purpose of a number game on the computer. Children enjoy good humour and respond excitedly to new experiences, such as delving into a bag to see what props and puppets they can find. Staff skilfully allow young children to make choices in their play, and then follow the child's interest to support their learning, for example using a computer game to reinforce children's understanding of colour and number. Children are given sufficient opportunity to complete or re-visit an activity, which valuably allows them time to consolidate their learning and experience according to their own needs.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum to ensure that planning is effective, takes account of children's interests and starting points and provides some exciting learning opportunities. Evaluations of planned activities and observations of children's participation are used effectively to inform future planning and monitor their progress towards the early learning goals. Staff use a range of useful strategies to involve and challenge all children that include careful questioning and the use of props to capture children's interest and attention. Activity plans, however, do not clearly differentiate how activities will be adapted for individual or

groups of children who require more challenge or support. This means less experienced staff may not be able to identify individual children's needs when helping with activities.

Children are making good progress in all the areas of learning. They are purposefully busy and engaged throughout the day. They show enthusiasm and positive attitudes to learning as they sit well at circle time to listen to stories and take part in discussions or activities. They concentrate well and show growing independence as they select their resources and make decisions about what to do. Children communicate and express themselves with confidence. They participate eagerly in action rhymes and songs, which gives a firm foundation for their early reading skills, and some children are already progressing on to formal reading schemes. Children explore with a range of mark-making and early writing, including using chalk, paint and practising writing their names. They have less opportunity to experiment with writing in their role play and to explore writing for different purposes as resources are not readily provided for them to do this. Children enjoy using a range of different creative media to express their ideas in art, music and drama. They take part in music sessions, sing, play instruments and act out familiar fairy stories.

Children develop a good understanding of mathematical concepts as staff plan fun activities that focus on shape, measure, number and patterns. Children measure how much their plants have grown and weigh cooking ingredients. Staff also incorporate learning into children's play and routines, such as counting out cups and reinforcing the concept of 'full and empty' during meal times. Children perform simple problem-solving and calculation during number songs as they use props to predict how many are left. Children have many opportunities to explore and investigate how things work. They investigate the life cycles of plants and animals; use different materials to build and construct; explore tastes, smells and texture using their senses; and observe changes as water freezes into ice. Children confidently use the computer to aid their learning and show effective mouse control and understanding of the programs they use.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children become aware of the wider society through using appropriate resources and taking part in well-planned activities that reflect diversity. They celebrate festivals from a range of faiths including Easter, Ramadan and Chinese New Year. Learning is made fun and interesting, for example by sampling foods from around the world and becoming aware of different languages as they take part in regular French lessons. Children's individual needs and family backgrounds are respected, with all children being warmly welcomed and fully included in the life of the setting. Parents comment positively about the care their children receive and particularly value the small groups and friendly, personal service. Children's contributions are valued and self-esteem promoted as their work is proudly displayed all around them. All children receive equal chances to take part in activities as staff skilfully involve those that are more reserved. Children with any particular learning difficulties or disabilities receive appropriate support as the nursery ensures staff are appropriately trained and systems are in place to work with parents and other professionals as required.

Children understand responsible behaviour and respect boundaries as these are consistently reinforced by all staff. Expectations are high and staff manage children's behaviour appropriately

to their stage of development, with firm foundations for positive behaviour being established from the moment children start. Children play in a calm and relaxed atmosphere, responding very well to instructions. They show consideration for others as they work enthusiastically together to tidy up the toys and hand out plates and cups for meal times. They take responsibility for their environment as they sweep up sand and wipe tables. Even the very youngest children show an awareness of responsible behaviour as they attempt to hang aprons up after use and pick up books that have been left on the floor to give to staff.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is good. Parents are informed about topics and activities via the notice board and are encouraged to get involved in supporting their children's learning, such as helping with reading. They have formal opportunities to share their children's achievements and progress at regular open evenings. Staff are always available to speak to parents at other times.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children have a good awareness of the codes of behaviour and are very aware of belonging to a group. They enjoy the social occasions of coming together for meals and having tranquil moments to look at books afterwards or listening to music. Children develop awareness of their own customs and those of others through a broad range of experiences.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from consistent and caring staff, which enables them to settle quickly and make positive relationships with their carers. The nursery has a sound recruitment and vetting procedure that ensures staff are vetted and have suitable experience and qualifications. They receive good support from the proprietor and training needs are identified in order for them to develop further.

The nursery effectively deploys staff so that children receive good levels of care and attention. The staff confidently interact with the children, responding well to them and listening to their ideas. Organisation of space and resources ensures children have access to appealing play areas that provide a range of exciting learning opportunities. Good use is made of some stimulating props, such as puppets and story sacks, to support and promote children's learning in a fun way.

The nursery has developed a sufficient set of policies and procedures, though some of these are not fully understood by staff and are therefore not effective in practice. Parents receive regular verbal updates about their children's achievements and progress, and day-to-day record keeping is well-maintained and shared with parents. A photographic record of children participating in activities gives parents a good insight into their children's time at the nursery. The written information regarding the way the nursery operates is less helpful as it has not been updated to reflect current practices and the curriculum offered.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The proprietor and her strong team are keen to maintain and develop the level of children's achievement by placing strong emphasis on the curriculum. She works closely with the staff to monitor and evaluate

practice, and identifies areas for development in order to further improve. She allows staff to take responsibility for their areas, which helps motivate them and build a strong team, but she also has a very hands-on approach to providing help and support throughout the nursery.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the nursery was asked to provide more freedom of choice and ensure activities are age-appropriate and meet individual children's needs. It was also recommended that toys and resources be more easily accessible to children and sufficient information gathered on children at the time of placement. Good progress has been made to address these issues. Younger children now enjoy a less structured routine that reflects their stage of development. They are able to freely explore their environment and select their chosen resources because the nursery has reviewed the way they arrange their space and resources. Staff have a greater understanding of children's individual needs as a more thorough system of gathering personal information and initial assessment on joining the nursery has been implemented.

The nursery was also asked to address two key issues from the nursery education inspection. They were asked to increase opportunities for children to use their imagination more freely in creative activities, and to develop planning and assessment to show how children are progressing towards the early learning goals. Again, good progress has been made. Children now have free access to the art room throughout the sessions and can explore a wide range of creative media to express themselves as they so choose. Foundation Stage staff have developed their planning and assessment systems through seeking support from other agencies and changing their planning and assessment forms. This means that learning intentions for activities are focused on the stepping stones and children's progress towards the early learning goals is more easily monitored.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- review the child protection policy to ensure it includes procedures to follow in the event of allegations of abuse or neglect, and clarify the procedure to follow in the event of a child being lost or uncollected
- ensure the written information provided for parents in the prospectus is up-to-date, reflects the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Foundation Stage curriculum, and gives information on the sickness policy

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure plans show how differentiation will be made for children that need more challenge or support
- increase opportunities for children to experiment with writing for different purposes in their play and provide a greater variety of writing materials to which children can access easily at all times.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk